

BOOK REVIEW

Household Ecology: Economic Change and Domestic Life Among the Kekchi Maya in Belize. Richard R. Wilk. Tucson and London: University of Arizona Press, 1991. \$55.00 (clothbound). Pp. xx,280. ISBN 0-8165-1214-0.

It would be difficult to find a more fitting title for this scholarly and very readable book (although "household ecology" is arguably redundant). This is a comprehensive treatment with ten informative figures and 28 tables of data—a reflection of Wilk's familiarity with the study area, the Kekchi people and their interactions with their natural and agricultural ecosystems, themselves and with the so-called "outside world."

The extended preface is informative and it should not be skipped. In the introductory chapter, Wilk gives a brief historical and theoretical background followed by an outline of the book, chapter by chapter: Household social evolution; The household as a unit of analysis; The historical and ethnographic setting; The physical setting; Land tenure and crops; Domestic animals; Hunting and gathering; Economic change; The organization of labor; Households as adaptive groups; and Household history and ecology.

Predictably, this book will hold greater appeal for professional anthropologists than ethnobiologists, and I feel certain the author had the former group in mind as the primary targeted readership. Nonetheless, as a general ethnobotanist, I found the last half of the book, and especially chapters 6 through 9, meaty with concepts and discussions not only interesting but also germane to studies in ethnobiology and I suggest that investigators in this discipline might find ideas to consider in their research.

Although the price of the book will perhaps discourage at least some ethnobiologists from adding it to personal collections, I certainly recommend it as an important acquisition to institutional libraries.

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